

**City Council****Motion without Notice**

<b>MM8.35</b>	ACTION			Ward: 13
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**Accommodating the 2023 Just for Laughs Street Festival - by Councillor Chris Moise, seconded by Councillor Shelley Carroll**

*This Motion has been deemed urgent by the Chair.*

*\* This Motion is not subject to a vote to waive referral. This Motion has been added to the agenda and is before Council for debate.*

**Recommendations**

Councillor Chris Moise, seconded by Councillor Shelley Carroll, recommends that:

1. City Council direct the General Manager, Transportation Services to waive any additional fees associated with temporary traffic control adjustments outside the footprint of the Just for Laughs Street Festival.

**Summary**

This motion requests that City Council waive all additional municipal fees related to use of the public realm outside the fees set out in Chapter 441 associated with proposed traffic adjustments as a result of the temporary street closure for the Just for Laughs Street Festival from September 21 to September 25, 2023

Just for Laughs provides three days of music, stand-up comedy and other performance art, featuring up-and-coming local artist and global headliners. Since the beginning of this term, Just for Laughs has been working with City staff in Transportation Services, Economic Development and Culture and Municipal Licensing and Standards, to help facilitate their planned street festival associated with their 2023 Comedy Festival.

As was permitted last year, Just for Laughs has been working on a plan to close the portion of Front Street East between Yonge Street and Church Street, as well as a portion of Scott Street nearby, to accommodate a street festival that includes both Front Street East and the adjacent Berczy Park. This free-to-attend street festival will partially run alongside their indoor programming at theatres within the area, and will include a stage for music and performances. The 2022 street festival drew thousands of residents to the street festival event, and is supported by the St. Lawrence Market Neighbourhood Business Improvement Area for the positive economic impact it had for local businesses.

Following the 2022 street festival and upon my election, my office has worked with Just for Laughs to have their street festival return for 2023. This has resulted in a significant number of changes to reduce the impact of the street festival on nearby residential buildings and , improved communications with residents and stakeholders. While often challenging work, Just for Laughs has been a good partner for the City.

On June 23, 2023, City staff flagged with my office, citing significant traffic concerns as a result of the reduction of eastbound lanes through Ward 13. This verdict came after over six months of negotiation with Just for Laughs to accommodate their street festival, and without any prior communication of concerns with temporarily closing Front Street East.

To continue to provide sufficient road capacity for eastbound vehicles, City staff have recommended several options to aid in managing traffic, specifically during the weekday afternoon Peak Period. This proposal would require additional signage, signal timing changes as well as traffic agents and/or paid-duty officers to help direct traffic during this period. The provisions set out in the City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 743, Streets and Sidewalks, specifies Just for Laughs (the applicant) would be responsible for these costs.

Due to the dynamic nature of construction coordination, these situations are not always clear far in advance of a scheduled event. As a result, additional costs have never been discussed with Just for Laughs, and it would be appropriate to have fees associated with temporary changes outside the footprint of the event space accommodated by the City. Just for Laughs would be responsible for the fees associated with closing a portion of Front Street East as well as a portion of Scott Street. Aside from this waiver of additional costs, Just for Laughs is or would not be receiving any grants or in-kind services from the City for their 2023 street festival event.

This matter is time sensitive and urgent as City Council approval is required to waive the fees that would otherwise be required under the City of Toronto Municipal Code, and its next regular meeting in October is not until after Just for Laughs's event this year.

### **Background Information (City Council)**

Member Motion MM8.35